

Tartary called *Hami*. These melons, as we have already observed, may be kept fresh for five or six months. Great care is taken every year to make a proper provision of them for the emperor's table.

The *tse-tse* are a species of fruit peculiar to China, that grow in almost all the provinces. There are different kinds of them. Those of the southern parts of the empire are remarkably sweet; their seeds are black and flat, and the pulp is slimy and extremely juicy. In Chan-si and Chen-si the *tse-tse* are larger, firmer, and richer, and much fitter for being kept. The tree which produces this fruit is very beautiful; it is as tall and bushy as a middling sized walnut-tree: its leaves in spring and summer are of a bright green, but in autumn they appear of a beautiful red. The fruit is the size of a common apple; in proportion as they ripen, they assume an orange-colour; and when they are dried, they are as sweet and mealy as figs.

Two kinds of fruit with which we are not acquainted, are found in the provinces of Fo-kien, Quang-tong, and Quang-si. The first, called *li-tchi*, of the size of a date, has a stone, which is long and very hard, and covered with a soft juicy pulp, that has an exquisite taste. This pulp is inclosed with a rough, thin rind, shaped at one end like an egg. We are assured, that this fruit is delicious; but it is dangerous when eat to excess; as it is so hot, as to occasion an eruption over the whole body. The Chinese suffer it to dry in the rind, until it becomes black and shrivelled, like prunes. By these means, it is preserved all the year; they generally use it in tea, to which it communicates a certain sourness, which they prefer to the sweetness of sugar.



This fruit is carried to Pe-kin for the use of the emperor, inclosed in tin vessels, filled with spirits mixed with honey and other ingredients, and thus it preserves an appearance of freshness ; but loses much of its flavour. That this prince might taste them in the highest perfection, the trees themselves have been sometimes transported to the capital in boxes ; and they have been so well managed, that, when they arrived there, the fruit was near its maturity.

Another kind of fruit peculiar to the southern provinces, is the *long-yen*, or *dragon's eye* ; it is of a round figure, has a yellowish skin, and its pulp is white, tart and juicy, and is very agreeably flavoured.

The Chinese distinguish three kinds of apricot trees ; the apricot-tree with double flowers ; the apricot-tree that produces fruit, and the wild apricot-tree. The apricot-tree with double flowers, is cultivated in gardens ; the Chinese divide this tree into four principal classes ; which are the millefolia, pale yellow, milk white, and the common, the buds of which at first appear red ; but the flowers whiten as they blow. There are dwarf apricot-trees with double flowers, which are placed for ornament in apartments, where they flower during winter. The rest are planted on little mounts in gardens, and have a very beautiful effect in spring. The apricot-tree bearing fruit, and the wild apricot are similar to those of Europe, from the kernels of the latter the Chinese extract a good oil, which may be substituted for that used at table ; it is, at least, much superior to the oil produced from walnuts, which is burnt in lamps. The Chinese peasants warm their stoves with what remains of the stones, and collect the cinders for manuring their land.



The barren mountains which lie to the west of Pe-kin, are covered with these trees ; and the oil extracted from their kernels, render the peasants as rich as those who live in the low lands. Apricots in China, as in Europe, are generally the earliest fruit of summer. The Chinese preserve them both dry and liquid ; but they always wait until the fruit is quite ripe. Besides this, they press out the juice, boil and clarify it, and form it into a kind of lozenges, that may be kept as long as they choose, and which, when dissolved in water, make a cooling and refreshing beverage.

China produces abundance of grapes ; it is not, therefore from a want of this fruit, that the Chinese make so little use of wine. Those who believe that the vine was not known in the Chinese empire until very late, and that it was carried thither from the west, labour under a great mistake, for all the literati assert, that that the vine has been known and cultivated in China from the remotest antiquity, and it is certain, that there were vines in Chan-si and Chen-si several centuries before the Christian era ; and that a sufficiency of them were cultivated to make abundance of wine. Grosier says, that in the large Chinese herbal book it is said that wine made from grapes, was the wine of honour, which several cities presented to the emperors, their governors and viceroys. In 1373, the emperor Tai-tsou accepted some of it, for the last time, from Tai-yuen, a city of Chen-si, and forbade any more to be presented, saying, *I drink little wine, and I am unwilling, that what I do drink, should occasion any burden to my people.*



The vine has however, like the empire itself, experienced its revolution, it has often been included in the list of proscribed trees and shrubs that impeded agriculture, and the extirpation was at times carried so far in many provinces, that the remembrance of it was forgotten. With regard to the present state of the culture of vines in China, we know from unquestionable authority that the emperors Kang-hi, Yong-tching and Kien-long, now on the throne, have caused a number of new plants to be introduced from foreign countries; that the three provinces of Honan, Chan-tong and Chenfi, have repaired their former losses; that the large cities of Tai-yuen and Ping-yang in Chan-fi, are become famous on account of the great quantity of dried grapes that are procured from their environs, and that the province of Pe-tcheli, at all times fruitful in vines, produces so many at present, that there are fourteen of its districts celebrated for their raisins, which are preserved and sold in Pe-kin at a very moderate price.

As roots and greens are the principal nourishment of the people, they spare no labour to procure them good. Besides those kinds common in Europe, they have a great number of others, in a great measure unknown to us, at least to the nation at large. Among these is a species of onion, which are not produced from seed, as ours are. Towards the close of the season, some small filaments spring from the ends of the leaves, in the middle of which a white onion is formed, like those that grow in the earth. This small onion again shoots forth leaves similar to those which support it; and these new leaves bear another onion on their



points, but in such a manner, that the leaves and the onion become smaller as they are farther distant from the earth.

Rue, sorrel, cabbage-plants and other greens, when transported from India to China, either die or degenerate before the end of two or three years. The Chinese, however, have real cabbages; but they never grow into a head. They have also had parsley for a long time; but it loses the taste and beauty which it has in Europe.

Among the pot-herbs which we have not, and for which it is said the Chinese are to be envied, is a plant called *pe-tsai*. It is much used, and bears some resemblance to the Roman beet; but differs from it in its flower, seed, taste and size. The best *pe-tsai* grows in the northern provinces, where the inhabitants leave it to be softened by the hoar-frosts. The quantity sown and consumed is very great indeed; and in the months of October and November the bridges of Pe-kin are almost blocked up by waggons which continue passing from morning till night, loaded with this plant. The Chinese make provision of *pe-tsai* for winter; pickling of it, and mixing it with their rice.

The Chinese cultivate even the bottom of their waters, and the beds of their lakes, ponds and rivulets, produce crops that to us are unknown. Their industry has found out resources in a number of aquatic plants, several of which, as the *pi-tsi*, or water-chestnut, and the *lien-hoa*, are the greatest delicacies of a Chinese table. The government has caused this latter plant to be cultivated in all the lakes, marshes and waste grounds covered with water, which belong to the state. And



the emperor has ordered all the canals which ornament his gardens, to be planted with it; and the greater part of the ditches round his palace are full of it. The flowers and verdure of this plant cover those two immense sheets of water in the centre of Pe-kin, and which are only separated by a bridge, where every body may pass, and from which there is an excellent view of the gardens belonging to the imperial palace. The *pi-tsi* grows only in the southern provinces of China; it soon dies at Pe-kin; its leaves are as long as those of the bulrush, but hollow, and formed into a pipe like the top of an onion. Its fruit is found in a cover formed by its root, in which it is inclosed, as a chestnut in its husk. And when this husk is broken, the fruit may be extracted, without hurting the plant. It is exceedingly wholesome, and has a most delicate taste. It is given to sick people to chew, as it is very cooling for the mouth.

#### TREES, SHRUBS AND PLANTS.

China contains almost every species of trees that are known in Europe, but we shall only notice particularly those peculiar to the country, or, at least, such as are not to be found in our western climate.

**TALLOW-TREE.** Among the extraordinary trees, we cannot but distinguish that which produces tallow. This tree is of the size of a cherry-tree; its branches are crooked; its leaves are shaped like a heart, and of a bright red colour; it has a smooth bark, a short trunk, and a round bushy top. The fruit is contained in a husk divided into three spherical segments, which open when it is ripe, and discover three white grains, of the size of a small walnut. In each of these is a



stone, and the pulp with which these stones are covered, has all the properties of tallow, and its colour, smell and consistence are exactly the same. The Chinese make candles of it, mixing it only with a little linseed oil, to render it softer and sweeter. Did they purify it as tallow is purified in Europe, the candles made from it would not be inferior, but, as this precaution is neglected, they have a more disagreeable smell, produce a thicker smoke, and afford a fainter light.

**WAX-TREE.** The Chinese procure from certain trees a kind of wax, nearly equal in quality to that made by bees, which they call *pe-la*. This wax is deposited by small insects, on two kinds of trees; no other affording them proper nourishment. The first is short and bushy, and grows in a dry, sandy soil, called by the Chinese *kan-la-chu*. The other species is larger, thrives only in moist places, and is named *choui-la-chu*.

The *kan-la-chu*, is of a shrubby nature, and easily propagates; walls may be covered, or hedges be formed of it; it equally well endures heat and cold, and thrives without the least culture, in the barrenest soil.

The small insects that make the *pe-la*, do not naturally frequent these trees; they must be placed upon them: but this is not difficult; and, after a tree is once stocked, it always retains them. Towards the beginning of winter, small tumours are perceived upon the *kan-la-chu* that have already produced wax, which continually increase, until they become of the size of a small walnut: these are so many nests filled with the eggs of insects, called *pe-la-tshong*, or *la-tchong*. When



the warmth of spring makes the tree shoot forth its blossoms, it also gives life to the insects that cover it. Then is the proper time to deposit nests on those trees which have none. To do this the Chinese make small bundles of straw, on each of which they put seven or eight nests; they afterwards tie these to the branches, taking care to place the nests immediately on the bark. If the shrub is five feet in height, it is capable of supporting one or two nests on each of its boughs. After these insects are hatched, they run upon the branches, disperse themselves over the leaves, and perforate the bark, under which they retire; but come forth at the proper season for making their wax.

About the middle of June, this wax begins to appear upon the *kan-la-chu*. A few filaments, like those of fine soft wool, are perceived rising from the bark, around the body of the insect; by degrees, these filaments form a kind of down, which becomes thicker, and increases in size during the heats of summer. This crust covers the insect, and defends it from the heat, rain and ants. The Chinese say, that if the wax were left too long on the tree, the insects would not make their nest. Care must, therefore, be taken to gather it before the first hoar frosts.

This wax is white and bright, and preserves its transparency to the depth of an inch. It is carried to court, and there reserved for the use of the emperor, princes and chief mandarins. An ounce of it added to a pound of oil the mixture acquires a consistency, and forms a wax little inferior to that made by bees. The physicians employ it in curing several diseases; and when applied to wounds, it makes the flesh heal in a very short time.



**VARNISH-TREE.** An opinion long prevailed in Europe, that the celebrated varnish of the Chinese was only a composition, which the Chinese had the art of making. It is now known, that they are indebted to nature and their climate only, for this liquor, which gives so much lustre and beauty to many of their manufactures. It is nothing else than a reddish gum which distils from certain trees called *tsi-chu*. They grow in the provinces of Kiang-si and Se-tchuen; but those which are found in the territories of Kan-tcheou, one of the most southerly cities of Kiang-si, produce the most valuable varnish.

The *tsi-chu*, the bark and leaves of which resemble the ash, bears neither fruit nor flowers. It is, when full grown, about fifteen feet in height; and the circumference of its trunk, about two feet. The Chinese propagate this tree by cuttings, but they do not procure varnish from it until its trunk is nearly five inches in diameter, a size which it seldom attains in less than seven or eight years. Varnish extracted from a tree smaller, or of less age, has neither the same body or splendour. This liquor distils only in the night time, and during the summer season; for the varnish produced in spring or autumn, is always mixed with a great deal of water, and in winter it does not flow at all.

To obtain the gum, they make several rows of incisions round the trunk, proportioned to the vigour of the tree. The first row is at seven inches from the earth, and the rest at the same distance from each other, to the top of the trunk, and sometimes on the boughs, which are of sufficient strength and size.



Into these incisions, which are made towards evening, they insert a shell, and next morning they collect the varnish that has fallen into them; the following evening they are again inserted; and this operation is continued until the end of summer. A thousand trees yielding, on an average, in one night, near twenty pounds of varnish.

This varnish, for the most part, is not extracted by the proprietors of the trees, but by merchants, who purchase them for the season, at three-pence per foot. These merchants afterwards hire workmen, to attend to them, to whom they give an ounce of silver per month, for their labour and maintenance.

While the varnish distils, it exhales a malignant vapour, the bad effects of which are often severely felt, and can only be prevented by preservatives and great precaution. The merchant who employs these workmen keeps by him a large vase filled with oil, in which a certain quantity of those fleshy filaments found in hog's lard have been boiled. When the workmen are going to fix the shells to the trees, or collect the varnish, they rub their face and hands with this oil, with great care; and after eating, they wash their whole bodies with warm water, in which the bark of the chefnut-tree, fir-wood, crystalized salt-petre, and other drugs, have been boiled. When at work near the trees, they put upon their heads a cloth bag, in which there are two holes, and cover the fore part of their bodies with a kind of apron made of doe-skin, suspended from their necks with strings, and tied round them with a girdle. They also wear boots, and have coverings on their arms, made of the same kind of skin. The



labourer who should neglect these precautions would soon be punished for his rashness. The disorder shews itself by tetters, which become of a bright red colour, and spread in a very short time; the body swells, and the skin bursts and appears covered with an universal leprosy. The unhappy victim could not long endure the excruciating pains which he feels, was not a speedy remedy found in those preservatives we have before mentioned.

The season of collecting varnish being ended, the merchant having strained it, puts it into small casks, closely stopped. A pound of it costs him about one shilling and eight-pence sterling; and he generally gains cent. per cent. upon it, and sometimes more, according to the distance of the place to which he transports it; besides this, he sells the dregs of it to the druggists, who use them for certain purposes in medicine.

IRON WOOD.—This tree rises to the height of a large oak; but it differs both in the size of its trunk and in the shape of its leaves. Its wood is so exceedingly hard and heavy, that it sinks in water; it is said that the anchors of Chinese ships of war are made of it.

NAN-MOU.—Travellers describe this tree as the cedar, which it probably is. It is one of the tallest in China; its branches shoot up vertically, and grow from the trunk, only at a certain height, and terminate in a bush or tufted top. The Chinese consider its wood as incorruptible.—*When we are desirous, say they, of erecting an edifice to last for ever, we must employ only the nan-mou.* Great use, therefore is made of this wood in building the emperor's palaces, where all the pillars, beams, and doors are made of it.



ROSE WOOD.—This tree furnishes the most beautiful and valuable wood used by the Chinese artists. It is of a very dark colour, striped and variegated with delicate veins, which have the appearance of painting. It is employed for making different pieces of furniture, which are in greater request, and cost more, than those that are varnished.

CAMPHIRE TREE.—The tree from which camphire is procured, is also a production of China, and, it is said, that some of them are found above an hundred cubits in height, and so thick, that twenty persons cannot enclose them. The trunks of these trees, when old, emit sparks of fire; but their flame is so subtle, that no danger is to be apprehended from it.

The method used by the Chinese for obtaining camphire, is as follows :—They take branches fresh from the tree, chop them small, and lay them to steep in spring water for three days and nights. After they have been thus soaked, they are put into a kettle where they are boiled for a certain time, during which they continually stir them with a stick of willow :—when they perceive the sap of these small chips adheres to the stick, in the form of white frost, they strain the whole off, throwing away the dregs and refuse. This liquor is then poured gently into an earthen basin well varnished, in which it is suffered to remain during the night, it is then found coagulated, and formed into a solid mass. To purify this first preparation, they procure, some earth from an old wall, which, when pounded and reduced to a very fine powder, they put into the bottom of a copper basin; over this layer of earth they spread a layer of camphire, and continue thus until they have



laid four strata. The last, which is of fine earth, they cover up with the leaves of the plant *po-ho*, or penny-royal, and over the whole place another bason, which they join very closely to the former, by means of a kind of red earth that cements their brims together. The basons, thus prepared, are then put over a fire, which is so managed as to preserve the heat equal on all parts. When the basons have been exposed to the necessary heat, they are taken off and left to cool ; after which they are separated, and the sublimated camphire is found adhering to the cover. This operation is often repeated two or three times, for the purpose of having the camphire more pure. The camphire thus collected is then put between two earthen vessels, the edges of which are surrounded with several bands of wet paper. The vessels are kept for about an hour over an equal and moderate fire ; and when they are cool, the camphire is found in its utmost perfection, and ready for use.

This method of procuring camphire may be practised in all seasons of the year, which could not be the case, were it extracted like other resinous substances, that only flow during a certain short space of time. Besides, by lopping the branches of the camphire tree, less hurt is done to it than by making incisions, which are always injurious.

**SIANG.**—The *siang* grows to the height of a chestnut tree, and bears a fruit which serves in dying, as a substitute for the gall-nut ; it is inclosed in a double husk, of the size of a chestnut, which it also resembles in colour. The exterior husk is that which is used properly for dying. Hogs will feed upon this fruit, although it has a disagreeable taste. The *siang* grows with little



culture, to the north of *Pe-kin*, and in the province of *Tche-kiang* ; and there can be little doubt but it would thrive in the barren and mountainous regions of Europe.

LO-YA-SONG.—This name is given to a kind of pine, found near *Keou-ouai*, beyond the great wall. Its trunk, branches, leaves, and fruit, exactly resemble those of our common pines ; but it is distinguished by several singularities : all its leaves fall in autumn ; its wood is exceedingly hard, and fit for various purposes ; but the sap it contains is poisonous. Those who are employed in cutting this tree, must take great care that no drops spurt out on the skin ; for it raises blisters and pimples which cannot easily be cured. If its root, which is of a reddish colour, is put into water, it soon petrifies ; it is then used for sharpening the finest and best-tempered tools. This petrification changes its figure so little, that it cannot be perceived, unless examined very closely ; but its weight is considerably augmented.

LUNG-JU-SHU.—The trunk of this tree is equal in thickness to a large plumb tree, and divides itself into two or three principal branches, which are subdivided into others that are much smaller. Its bark is of a reddish grey colour, and spotted like that of a hazel. The extremities of its branches are knotty, very unequal, and full of pith. The trunk of this tree furnishes planks which are employed in making of furniture. The fruit, which resembles our cherries before they are ripe, grow from long, green and fibrous pedicles. The skin of this fruit is very hard, speckled in some places with small red spots, and containing a



greenish substance, which, by maturity, is converted to a kind of jelly. The Chinese rub their hands with it in winter, to prevent chilblains.

TCHA-KE.—This tree has no bark on its trunk or branches; it grows on the northern coasts, and if it is thrown into the fire, when green, it burns as readily as the driest wood. If made into charcoal, it kindles very easily, produces a strong heat, without smell or smoke, and lasts much longer than any other kind.

TCHU-KOU.—This tree is much valued by the Chinese, as its inner rind furnishes them with the greater part of the paper which they consume. When its branches are broken, the bark peels off in the form of long ribbons. Were we to determine the species to which this tree belongs, by its leaves, we should class it with the wild mulberry-tree, but, by its fruit, it more resembles the fig tree. This fruit adheres to the branches, without any stalk, and, when pulled before its maturity, appears, like the fig, to be full of milk. This tree grows on the mountains, and in a rocky soil.

KIN-KOUANG-TSEE, OR, SOUR JUJUBE.—This is a large tree, the leaves of which are long and sharp-pointed. Its flowers have a greenish tint; and the fruit it produces resemble large jujubes: on account of their beautiful yellow colour, they are called *golden-jujubes*. This fruit, when dried, retains a sourish taste; and the golden colour changes to a delicate red. The stone is hard, and shaped like a heart, as well as the kernel which they contain. These stones were formerly used by the superstitious votaries of idols, for making chaplets, on which several figures were engraven. It is said to have been originally brought from Bengal, and



that great difficulty was found at first to rear it in China; but it is so naturalized at present, that it rises to the height of the tallest fruit-trees. Its wood is hard, and of a very fine grain.

TSE-SONG-YUEN-PE, OR JUNIPER CYPRESS.—This is one of the singularities of nature; it partaking of the properties of the juniper and of the cypress tree. Its trunk is about half a foot in diameter, and shoots out, almost where it springs from the earth, a great number of branches, which extend on all sides, and are divided into others that form a top extremely thick and bushy. These branches are loaded with leaves; some resembling those of the cypress; others those of the juniper: the latter are long, narrow, and prickly, and are ranged along the branches in rows of four, five, and sometimes six each; hence, when the branches are viewed lengthwise, the leaves appear like stars, with four, five, or six rays, the leaf nearest the eye exactly covering that which is next to it, and leaving the intervals between the rows perfectly open. The small branches, or twigs, which are covered with these juniper leaves, are generally found below the principal boughs; and the branches that shoot out from the upper part, of the same boughs, bear cypress leaves. There are found whole branches which resemble those of the cypress; and there are others, that, in like manner, have an affinity to the juniper alone; there are some, also, which partake of the nature of both; and, lastly, there are others, that bear only a few cypress leaves, grafted, as it were, on the end of a juniper branch, or a small juniper twig, is sometimes seen springing from a cypress bough.



The bark of this tree is very rough and unequal, and of a greyish brown colour, inclining to red. Its wood is like that of the juniper; but it is of a resinous nature. The leaves smell like cypresses, and have something of an aromatic flavour, but sharp and bitter. This tree bears a small, round green fruit, a little larger than that of the juniper: it contains two reddish grains, shaped like a heart, which are as hard as a grape-stone.

**BAMBOO.**—The *bamboo* is a kind of reed, which grows to the height and size of large trees. Its leaves are long, and bend backwards towards the points. The trunk is hollow, and divided at certain spaces by knots, but it is very strong, and capable of sustaining an enormous weight. Bamboo-reeds are bored and used as pipes to convey water; when split lengthwise and divided into thin slips, they are woven into mats, trunks, and various other works; paper is also made of a certain paste procured from them, after they have been bruised and steeped in water; the *Bamboo* grows in all the provinces of China, but, is most plenty in the province of *Tche-kiang*, where whole forests are found of it.

**ACASIA.**—The *acasia* of America is common in China. The Chinese authors pretend, that the seeds extracted from its pods are employed with success in medicine.

**TEA-PLANT.**—Among the aromatic shrubs of China, that which furnishes tea holds the first rank. It is not, however, known by this name in the country, but is called *tcha*; and, by corruption in some of the maritime provinces, *tha*, from which is derived our word *tea*.

Father le Comte, in his memoirs has given us a very



accurate description of this shrub.—‘ Tea,’ says he,  
‘ grows in the valleys, and at the bottoms of the moun-  
‘ tains. Rocky ground produces the best ; and that  
‘ which is planted in a light soil is next in quality. The  
‘ worst is found in earth of a yellow colour ; but in  
‘ whatever place it is cultivated, care must be taken to  
‘ expose it to the south : it then acquires more vigour,  
‘ and bears three years after it has been planted. The  
‘ root of the shrub is like that of the peach tree ; and  
‘ its flowers resemble the white wild rose. When  
‘ I entered the province of Fokin, I was shewn, for the  
‘ first time, the tea plant, upon the declivity of a little  
‘ hill. It was only about five or six feet in height.  
‘ Several branches joined together and seperated to-  
‘ wards their upper extremities, formed a tufted top  
‘ almost like that of the European myrtle. The trunk,  
‘ though to appearance dry, bore branches that were  
‘ covered with beautiful green leaves, narrow and ta-  
‘ pering towards the point, about an inch and a half in  
‘ length, and indented round the edges. The oldest,  
‘ which appeared of a whitish colour below, where brit-  
‘ tle, hard and bitter. The young ones were soft and  
‘ pliable, of a reddish tint, smooth, transparent, and ve-  
‘ ry agreeable to the taste, especially after they had  
‘ been chewed for some time. As it was then in Sep-  
‘ tember, I found on them three kinds of fruit. On  
‘ the young and tender branches I observed small soft  
‘ berries, of a green colour, filled with very minute  
‘ yellow grains. On the rest of the branches the fruit  
‘ was as large as beans, but of different shapes ; some  
‘ were round, and contained a pea ; others long, and  
‘ inclosing two ; and several were triangular, and con-



ained three. The outer rind which inclosed this seed was green, smooth, and very thick. Under the second, which was white and thinner, was a third pellicle, exceedingly fine, that covered a kind of nut adhering to the rind by a small fibre, from which it derives its nourishment. When this fruit is young, its taste is somewhat bitterish ; but, two or three days after it has been gathered, it lengthens, changes to a yellow colour, appears dry and shrivelled like an old filbert, and beomes very oily and bitter. I found also upon these trees a third kind of old and hard fruit, the black exterior rind of which, being half open, discovered within a hard, brittle husk, exactly like that of a chesnut ; but it was so flatted and dried, that after I had broken it, I could scarcely discover any vestige of fruit. In some of them I found this fruit reduced to powder ; and in others, I observed a very small nut, perfectly dry and half covered with its first pellicle. Among these fruits were a great number called female, which had no germ. Those that have a germ, if they are sown, will produce trees ; but the Chinese generally make use of slips for raising plants. That I might be better acquainted with the nature of this tree, I had the curiosity to taste the bark of the trunk and branches ; I also chewed the wood and fibres, both of which appeared to have no bitterness, and even after a considerable time, I only perceived a taste somewhat like liquorice, but very faint.

The Chinese distinguish several kinds of tea, but they all may be reduced to the four following ; the *Song-to tcha*, the *Vou-y tcha*, the *Lou-ngan tcha*, and the *Pou-eul tcha*.



The first takes its name from the mountain *Song-lo*, situated in the province of *Kiang-nan*. This mountain is not very extensive, but it is entirely covered with these shrubs, which are also cultivated at the bottoms of the neighbouring mountains. The *Song-lo* is the same which we call *green tea*. It is cultivated almost like vines, and is cropped at a certain height, to prevent it from growing. This shrub must be renewed every four or five years, because, after that period, its leaves harden and become sour. The flower which it bears is white, and shaped like a small rose, composed of five leaves. The *Song-lo tcha* may be kept for several years, and is used in China, with great success, as a remedy for various distempers.

The Chinese of the province of *Kiang-nan* are the only people who crop the tea-shrub; for every where else it is suffered to grow to its natural size, which sometimes extends to ten or twelve feet. When the tree is very young, they take care also to incline and bend down its branches, that they may collect its leaves afterwards with greater ease. This shrub grows often on the rugged backs of steep mountains, access to which is dangerous, and sometimes impracticable.

The *Vou-y tcha*, which is known in Europe by the name of *bohea*, and *fouchong*, grows in the province of *Fo-kien*, and takes its name also from a mountain, called *Vou-y*, situated in the district of *Kien-ning-fou*.

This is the tea most esteemed throughout the empire; as agreeing better with the stomach, being in their estimation lighter, sweeter, and more delicate to the taste than the *Song-lo*.

From these two kinds of tea three others are composed, the difference of which results from the choice



of the leaves, and the time when they are gathered. That which contains only the tender leaves of young trees, is called *mao tcha*, or *imperial tea*. This is the most delicate, and is that which is transported to court for the use of the emperor. It is seldom ever distributed but in presents ; but it may sometimes be bought on the spot where it grows for twenty-pence or two shillings the pound.

The second sort is composed of older leaves, and goes under the name of *good Vou-y tcha*. The rest of the leaves that are suffered to remain and grow larger form the third kind, which is sold to the common people at a very cheap rate.

The flowers of this shrub also furnish another kind of tea ; but those who are desirous of procuring it, must pay a superior price for it.

The *Lou-ngan tcha*, which is the third kind of tea we have mentioned, grows in the neighbourhood of the city of *Lou-ngan-tcheou*. It differs in nothing from the *Song-lo*, either in the configuration of its leaves, or in the manner of cultivation ; but it is neither so heating, nor so harsh and corrosive—properties which, no doubt, result from the difference of the soils in which they grow.

The fourth kind is procured from a village named *Pou-eul*, situated in the province of *Yun-nan*, on the frontiers of the kingdoms of *Pegu*, *Ava*, *Laos* and *Tong-king*. This village is become considerable by its commerce in this article : people resort to it from all parts ; but the entrance of it is forbidden to strangers, who are only permitted to approach the bottoms of the mountains, to receive the quantity of tea which they



want. The trees that produce this tea are tall and bushy ; and grow without any cultivation. The leaves are longer and thicker than those of the *Song-lo tcha* and *Vou-y tcha* ; and they are rolled up in the same manner as tobacco, and formed into masses, which are sold at a dear rate. This tea is much used in the provinces of *Yun-nan* and *Koei-tcheou*. It has nothing harsh ; but it has not that agreeable taste and flavour which distinguish other kinds when infused.

The *Kaiel tcha* is chiefly used by the Mogul Tartars. It is only the refuse of the leaves of all the different teas which have been suffered to grow hard, mixed indiscriminately. These people, who feed on raw flesh, are subject to continual indigestion, if they give over the use of tea ; on which account they transport great quantities of it from China ; and, in exchange, furnish horses for the emperor's cavalry.

We must not confound with real tea every thing that the Chinese call *tcha*. What is sold in the province of *Chang-tong* as tea, is properly but a kind of moss, which grows on the rocks in the neighbourhood of *Mang-ing-bein*. A like kind of tea is distributed in some of the other northern provinces, which is not composed of real leaves, although the merchants vend it under the name of *tcha-ye tea-leaves*. If this commodity is adulterated even in China, can we flatter ourselves, that the tea we have in Europe is pure, and without mixture !

When the tea-leaves have been collected, they are exposed to the steam of boiling water ; after which they are put upon plates of copper, over a fire until they become dry and shrivelled, and appear such as we see them in Europe.



According to the testimony of Kœmpfer, tea is prepared in the same manner in the isles of Japan. ‘There are to be seen there,’ says this traveller, ‘public buildings erected for the purpose of preparing the fresh-gathered tea. Every private person who has not suitable conveniences, or who is unacquainted with the operation, may carry his leaves thither as they dry. These buildings contain a great number of small stoves raised about three feet high, each of which has a broad plate of iron fixed over its mouth. The workmen are seated round a large table covered with mats, and are employed in rolling the tea leaves which are spread out upon them. When the iron plates are heated to a certain degree by the fire they cover them with a few pounds of fresh-gathered leaves, which, being green and full of sap, crackle as soon as they touch the plate. The workmen then stirs them with his naked hands, as quickly as possible, until they become so warm that he cannot easily endure the heat. He then takes off the leaves with a shovel, and lays them upon mats. The people who are employed in mixing them, take a small quantity at a time, roll them in their hands always in the same direction, while others keep continually stirring them in order that they may cool sooner, and preserve their shrivelled figure the longer. This process is repeated two or three times before the tea is deposited in the warehouses. These precautions are necessary to extract all the moisture from the leaves.’

The people in the country bestow much less labour on the preparation of their tea. They are contented with drying the leaves in earthen vessels, over the fire. This



operation, being much simpler, is attended with less trouble and expence, and enables them to sell their tea at a much lower price.

The Chinese and people of Japan generally keep their tea a year before they use it, because, as they pretend, when quite new, it possesses a narcotic quality which hurts the brain.

The Chinese pour warm water over their tea, and leave it to infuse, as we do in Europe ; but they drink it in general without sugar.

The isles of Japan produce abundance of tea. Kœmpfer, in his relation, gives an account of the different seasons in which the people of these islands collect tea. The first begins about the middle of the new moon which precedes the vernal equinox. The leaves gathered at this time are called *ficki-tsiaa*, or *tea in powder*, because it is pulverized. These young and tender leaves are only three or four days old when they are gathered ; and as they are exceedingly dear, they are generally reserved for the great people and princes. This is the imperial tea of the Japanese. The labourers employed in collecting it, do not pull the leaves by handfuls, but pick them one by one, and take every precaution that they may not break them. In this manner they gather from four to ten or fifteen pounds a day each person.

The second crop is collected in the second Japanese month, about the end of March or beginning of April. At this season some of the leaves are yet in their growth, and others have attained to perfection ; they are, however, all gathered indiscriminately, and afterwards picked and sorted, according to their age and size : the



youngest, which are carefully separated from the rest, are often sold for imperial tea. Tea gathered at this season is called *Too-tsiaa*, or *Chinese tea*, because the people of Japan infuse it, and drink it after the Chinese manner.

The third and last crop of tea is gathered in the third Japanese month; that is about our June. The leaves are then very numerous and thick, and have acquired their full growth. This kind of tea, which is called *Ben-tsiaa*, is the coarsest of all, and is reserved for the common people. Some of the Japanese collect tea only at two seasons of the year, which correspond to the second and third, already mentioned; others have only one general gathering, towards the month of June: however, they always form different assortments of their leaves.

The most celebrated tea of Japan is that which grows near *Ud-si*, a small village situated close to the sea, and not far distant from *Meaco*. In the district of this village is a mountain, bearing the same name, the climate, of which is said to be extremely favourable to the culture of tea; it is inclosed by a hedge, and surrounded with wide ditches, to prevent access to it; and the tea shrubs that grow on this mountain are planted in regular order, and divided by different avenues and alleys.

The care of this place is entrusted to people who are ordered to guard the leaves from dust, and to defend them from the inclemency of the weather. The labourers who are appointed to collect the tea, abstain from every kind of gross food for some weeks before they begin, that their breath and perspiration may not in the least injure the leaves. They gather them with



the most scrupulous nicety, with very fine gloves on their hands, without which they never touch it. When this choice tea has undergone the process necessary for its preparation, it is escorted by the superintendant of the mountain, and a strong guard, to the emperor's court, and reserved for the use of the imperial family alone.

**COTTON-TREE.**—Cotton forms one of the most considerable branches of the commerce of China, and is cultivated with success in the southern provinces. As soon as they have reaped their grain, they sow cotton in the same field, after having turned up the earth slightly with a rake. When the rain or dew has moistened the ground, a shrub springs up, which rises to the height of two feet. The flowers appear about the beginning or towards the middle of August; they are generally yellow; but sometimes red. To the flower succeeds a kind of small button, which increases in the form of a pod, till it acquires about the size of a walnut. About the fortieth day after the flower has appeared, this pod bursts, divides itself into three parts, and discovers three or four small cotton balls of a bright white colour, something like those produced by silk-worms. These small downy balls adhere to the bottom of the pod, which is half open, and contains seed for the following year. As all these small grains are strongly attached to the filaments of the cotton, the Chinese make use of a machine for the purpose of separating them. It is composed of two cylinders highly polished, one of wood and the other of iron, about a foot in length, and an inch in diameter, placed together like European flattening mills. With one hand they put the



first in motion, and the second by the foot ; with the other hand they apply the cotton, which is drawn in between them by their motion, and passes to the other side, while the grains that are left behind quite bare, fall to the ground. The cotton, thus freed from its seeds, is carded and spun, and afterwards made into cloth.

KOU-CHU.—The shrub called *kou-chu*, bears a great resemblance to the fig-tree, both in the form of its branches and leaves. From its root several shoots generally spring up, forming a kind of bush ; but sometimes it consists of only one shoot. The wood is soft and spongy, and covered with bark like that of the fig-tree. Its leaves are deeply indented, and the colour and texture of their fibres are exactly the same as those of the fig-tree ; but they are larger, thicker, and much rougher to the touch.

This tree yields a milky juice, which the Chinese use for laying on gold-leaf in gilding. They make incisions in the trunk, into which they insert the edges of a shell, to receive the sap, which they use with a small brush, in delineating the figures they intend for the decoration of their work. They then lay on the gold-leaf, which is so strongly attracted by this liquor, that it never comes off.

TONG-TSAO.—Strangers are generally struck with the beauty of the artificial flowers made by the Chinese, but if the Chinese surpass European artists in these kinds of works, they are indebted for their superiority to the materials they employ. Neither silk, cotton, nor any kind of paper or cloth, is employed in the composition of these flowers. The substance of which their leaves



are formed, is the pith of a certian shrub, called by the Chinese *tong-tsao*. It is a kind of cane or bamboo, much resembling the European elder tree; but its pith is whiter, closer, and less spongy.

The *tong-tsao*, grows in dark, shady places, and rises to the height of six feet; its leaves resembling those of the nymphæ, or water lily; but are thicker. Its trunk is divided, like the bamboo, by knots, between which are comprehended several pipes, each about a foot and a half long, and which are generally largest towards the root of the plant.

This shrub is cut every year; and it shoots up a new stem the year following. It is transported in barks to *Kiang-nan*, where the pith is extracted, and prepared for the hands of the workman. When taken from the pipes it must be preserved from moisture, for without this precaution, it would be entirely useless.

**BETEL AND TOBACCO.** The Chinese, in imitation of almost all other eastern nations, use the betel-leaf as a sovereign remedy for those disorders which attack the breast and stomach. The betel grows like ivy, and twists around other trees. Its leaves are long and sharp-pointed, broad towards the stalk, and of a pale-green colour. The Chinese cover them with quicklime, and wrap them around the nut *areca*, which in shape greatly resembles a nutmeg. They chew these leaves continually, pretending that they strengthen the gums, comfort the brain, expel bile, nourish the glands of the throat, and serve as a preservative against the asthma, a disease very common in the southern provinces. They carry betel and *areca* in boxes, and present it when they meet one another in the same man-



mer as soldiers and other Europeans, who have habituated themselves to this filthy custom, do tobacco.

The use of tobacco is not so extensive in China as in Europe, but the country produces it in great abundance. The Chinese do not reduce their tobacco to powder, because they only use it for smoking. They gather the leaves when they are very ripe, and card them almost in the same manner as wool. They afterwards put them under a press, where they squeeze them together like the turf made from the refuse of the bark in tan yards.

**BELVIDERE, OR, CHENOPodium.** The Belvidere springs up about the end of March, its shoots rise to the height of eight or nine inches, in the shape of a child's fist half shut; it afterwards extends itself, and sends forth a number of branches loaded with leaves like those of flax; and as it grows, its branches arrange themselves naturally in the form of a pyramid; its leaves, yet tender, abound with juice, have a very agreeable taste; and may be eaten as a salad with vinegar, to which the Chinese often add a little ginger; being prepared like other leguminous plants, and baked with meat, it gives it an agreeable and pleasing flavour; when in its full beauty, its leaves become hard and unfit for the table; but nourishment is then found in its root, which has served often as a resource in times of famine and scarcity, being reduced to powder and made into bread.

The Chinese Herbal cites an example of four mountaineers, who lived on nothing but the leaves, roots and stalks of the belvidere, with which their country abounded, and enjoyed perfect health to a very great age.



It also adds, that to render this plant strong and flourishing, fire must be set to the grounds which are covered with it, as its own ashes are the best manure, and supply it with a nourishing moisture.

#### FLOWERING-TREES.

OU-TONG-CHOU. Among the trees which nature seems to have destined for the ornamenting of gardens, few have greater claims to notice than that which the Chinese call *Ou-tong-chu*. It is of a large size, resembling the sycamore. Its leaves are large, and proceed from a stalk about a foot in length, and is so bushy and loaded with such bunches of flowers, that it excludes the rays of the sun. About the month of August, small clusters of leaves begin to shoot out from the extremities of the branches, which are entirely different from those on the other parts of the tree; being smaller, whiter and softer, and supply the place of flowers. On the edges of these leaves grow three or four grains, of the size of a pea. These grains contain a white substance, the taste of which greatly resembles that of an unripe walnut. This is the fruit of the plant, but we have no account of any use made of this tree but for ornament.

MOLIEN. This is another flowering tree, the branches of which are few in number, very slender, full of pith, and covered with red bark interspersed with small white spots. It bears few leaves: but they are large, and very broad at the lower extremity, and adhere to pedicles, which seem to inclose the branch. This tree blows in the month of December, and produces large flowers, formed of seven or eight sharp-pointed oval leaves,



from the extremities of which proceed long filaments. Some of the flowers are yellow, others red, and others white. All the leaves fall when the flowers appear, or when they are ready to blow.

LA-MOE. This shrub resembles laurel, both in its form and size; but its branches are more extensive, and its leaves are attached, two and two, to short pedicels. The size of these leaves decreases in proportion to their distance from the extremities of the branches. Its flowers are produced in winter; they are yellow, and of an agreeable smell, resembling that of roses.

TCHA-HOA. The Chinese distinguish four kinds of the tree which they call *tcha-hoa*. It bears some resemblance to the Spanish laurel. It is an evergreen, the leaves grow in alternate rows along each side of its branches. They are of an oval figure, sharp pointed, indented on the edges, and of a dark-green colour above, but inclining to yellowish below. The buds of the *tcha-hoa* are covered with a soft, white down; they blow in December, and produce double flowers, supported by a calix, of a rose colour. These flowers have no pedicle, and adhere immediately to the branch. The second kind of *tcha-hoa* is very lofty. Its leaves are round at the extremity; and its flowers are large and red. The flowers of the two other kinds are whitish, and smaller.

YU-LAN. This tree, the most beautiful of any that ornament the Chinese gardens, rises to the height of thirty or forty feet. Its trunk, which is straight, and well proportioned, has very few branches. Its leaves are of a beautiful green colour, but few in number: they never appear until the flowers are half blown.



All its branches are crowned with flowers, the scent of which perfumes the air to a great distance around : they continue in blossom, however, only a few days. The flower, which consists of five, six, and eight leaves, disposed like those of a rose, is supported by a calix of four leaves, bristly within, and terminating in a point. From the middle of the flower rises a green, spongy pistil, surrounded at its base by small fibres, the tops of which are loaden with stamina. This flower produces an oblong fruit of a green colour, which reddens towards the end of summer. Its whole substance is fibrous, and almost as hard as wood.

The *yu-lan* is divided into several species ; such as double and single ; the *yu-lan* with white flowers, and that which produces flowers of a peach colour. The flowers of this tree are more beautiful and in greater abundance when it is young ; but it then bears no fruit. When it is twenty years old, its flowers are smaller and fewer ; but nearly all of them produce fruit. The *yu-lan* requires no other care than to be planted in a place sheltered from the north winds, and to be watered in spring. It is raised in boxes, as the Europeans raise orange-trees. When it has shed its leaves, the Chinese remove it to the green-house ; and, by accelerating its vegetation by means of stoves, procure flowers from it again in the beginning of the year ; it is then appropriated for ornamenting the interior apartments of the women. Some of these trees are annually sent by the governors of the southern provinces to the emperor.

AUTUMNAL HAI-TANG. This beautiful shrub, originally brought from the rocks which border the sea



coast, has been cultivated in China for more than fourteen centuries, and is as much celebrated in the works of the Chinese poets, as roses and lilies are in those of ours. Painters and embroiderers ornament almost all their works with its foliage and flowers. The stalk of the *hai-tang* is cylindric, and shoots forth a number of branches of a purple tint towards their bases, and full of knots, which are also of a purple colour round the edges. It throws forth a number of shoots, the tallest of which are about two feet and a half in height. Its leaves are much indented, of an oval form towards the stalk, pointed at their upper extremities, and full of small prickles; they grow almost opposite each other on the branches, at the same distance as the knots. Their colour above is a deep green, that below is much lighter, and almost effaced by their fibres, which are large, and of a delicate purple. The flowers grow in bunches at the extremities of the branches. Each flower is composed of four petals, two great and two small, resembling in colour the bloom of a peach-tree, and of nearly the same figure as the blossom of the cherry-tree. The two largest are cemented one upon the other, in the form of a purse. The pistil is composed of bright yellow grains, which separate gradually one from another by the lengthening of the filaments to which they adhere; they then open into little bells, and compose a small yellow tuft, supported by a slender stalk, which rises above the petals. The calix, which sustains each of the flowers, is composed of two purple-coloured leaves. In proportion as the flowers grow and increase in size, the two leaves of the calix open, become pale and dry, and drop off. The flowers, sup-



ported by small stalks, separate one from the other, and produce of themselves other flowers, which rise up from a new calix.

The autumnal *bai-tang* is with difficulty propagated from seed. It thrives best in a sandy soil, and care must be taken to refresh it only with pure water. It cannot endure the sun in any season, it is, therefore, always planted below walls that are exposed to the north. It generally begins to flower about the end of August, and after it has produced seed, its branches are cut down, it commonly shoots forth new ones before the spring following; but it is necessary to heap up gravel and pieces of brick round its roots, to prevent them from rotting. Great pains are taken to cultivate this tree at Pe-kin, but it does not thrive so well there as in the southern provinces. The smell of its leaves has an affinity both to the rose and violet; but it is weaker, and never extends to any great distance.

MOU-TAN, or PEONY-SHRUB. This is a wild shrub improved by culture, and has been known in China for fourteen hundred years. It is sometimes called *hoa-quang*, or the *king of flowers*, and *peleang-kin* (an hundred ounces of gold) in allusion to the excessive price given formerly by some of the virtuosi for certain species of this plant. A traveller, as is said, having found a peony on a shrub in the mountains of Ho-nan, was so struck with the novelty, that he tore up some of the roots, with the earth adhering to them, carried them home, and planted them in his garden. A bonze, ignorant of the origin of this peony shrub, imagined it might be raised by grafting. His attempt was attended with success; and the peonies he raised were more



beautiful than those which had been brought from the mountains. This plant soon engaged the attention of all the florists ; and, by careful and continual culture, was brought to greater perfection. An infatuation now became general ; and the provinces contended for superiority of skill in raising it, that they might have the glory of sending the finest to the emperor.

This plant, which is of a shrubby nature, shoots forth a number of branches, which form a top almost as large as those of the finest orange-trees that are planted in boxes. Some have grown to eight or ten feet in height, but few are raised at present to this size. The root of the *mou-tan* is long and fibrous, of a pale-yellow colour, and covered with a greyish or reddish rind. Its leaves are deeply indented, and of a much darker green above than below. Its flowers, composed of numberless petals; blow like a rose, and are supported by a calix composed of four leaves. From the bottoms of the petals arise several stamina, which bear on their tops small antheræ, of a beautiful golden colour. The fruit bends downward, bursts when they become dry, and shed their seed.

PE-GE-HONG. This shrub is remarkable for the beauty and singularity of its flowers, and above all for their duration, which has given rise to its name, *pé-gé-hong*, or *red of a hundred days*. This beautiful plant, which now holds a distinguished rank in the Chinese gardens, was originally found in the mountains of Fokien. Its leaves, sometimes placed alternately, sometimes opposite one to another, are of an oval form, a little sharpened towards the points : not indented, and their thickness somewhat between that of the leaves of the phillyrea and plum-tree.



The flowers of the *pé-gé-hong* blow at Pe-kin about the beginning of July ; they grow in bunches at the extremities of the branches, and succeed one another in such a manner, that they continue till the end of September, if they are sheltered from the heat of sun. The calix which supports them is spongy, and shaped like a bell ; of a pale yellow within, and red on the outside. It bends over the rising fruit, and becomes dry when it ripens. From this calix arise six crimson-coloured petals, in the form of festoons, which are long, round at top, and supported by as many slender, whitish stalks.

The trunk of the *pé-gé-hong* is thick ; and it appears that the Chinese florists have endeavoured to reduce it to a dwarfish size—a form for which they shew an uncommon fondness. They prune them in autumn, leaving only a few small branches, in order that they may be loaded with a greater abundance of flowers. The culture of this tree requires little care ; nothing is necessary but to place it in a green-house during the winter, to expose it to the south on the return of spring, to water it at proper seasons, and to shelter it from the excessive heats of summer.

YE-HIANG-HOA. The branches of this shrub are so weak, that they cannot grow upwards, or support themselves ; the florists, therefore, prop them with bamboo-reeds, to which small hoops are attached. Its leaves are of a deep green colour above, and a pale green below ; they are shaped like the head of a lance, and are supported by very long stalks, round which they form two ears. All the property of this tree consists in the exquisite odour exhaled by its flowers,



which are of a yellowish green colour. *Their smell is so sweet and agreeable, according to the account of the missionaries, that there is no flower existing which can be compared with the delicious ye-hiang-hoa; but owing to the delicacy of this plant, or to that of its perfume, it has scarcely any smell during the day-time: from this singularity springs its name, ye-hiang-hoa, or the flower which smells in the night.* The *ye-hiang-hoa* is originally from the southern provinces, and does not thrive at Pe-kin. The nicest attention of the most careful florists is scarcely sufficient to make it endure the winter though in a green-house, and to preserve it for a few years.

**LIEN-HOA, OR WATER LILY.** This aquatic plant has been known in China from the remotest antiquity. The poets of every dynasty have celebrated the splendour and beauty of its flowers; and its excellent virtues have made the doctors rank it high among medicinal plants. Its flowers are formed of several leaves, disposed in such a manner, that they resemble large tulips half open. From the middle of the flower rises a conical pistil, that becomes round and spongy; it is divided into several cells, filled with oblong seeds, covered with a husk like the acorn, and composed of two white lobes, in the middle of which is the germ. the stamina are formed of very delicate filaments, the top of which are of a violet-colour. The leaves of this plant are round, broad and large; they are thick, fibrous, and indented towards the middle; some of them float on the surface of the water, to which they seem to be cemented; others rise to different heights, and are supported by long stems. Its root, which is of the size of a man's arm,



is very hardy ; it is of a pale yellow colour within, and milk-white on the outside, and is sometimes twelve or fifteen feet in length. It creeps at the bottom of the water, and attaches itself to the mud by filaments. The stalk which supports the flowers and leaves of this plant is full of round holes to its extremity, like those of the root.

There are four kinds known in China ; the yellow, which is very rare, and supposed to be the same as that of Europe ; the red and white rose coloured, with single flowers ; the red and white rose-coloured, with double flowers ; the pale red striped with white, which is seldom seen, especially with double flowers. This plant requires no culture ; it is propagated by seed, but sooner by the root. One of its singularities is, that it endures much drought, though it grows naturally in water ; and that, though a friend to warmth, it thrives and produces the finest flowers beyond the great wall, and in the northern provinces. It does not bud before the end of May ; but it shoots forth very rapidly ; and its leaves form a verdure on the surface of the water, which is very delightful to the eye, especially when the flowers, in full bloom, unite the variety of their colours.

The seeds of this plant are eaten in China ; they are most delicate when they are green ; but harder of digestion ; they are preserved in many different ways with sugar. The root of this plant is also admitted by the Chinese to their tables : in whatever manner it may be prepared, it is equally wholesome. Great quantities of it are pickled with salt and vinegar, which they reserve to eat with their rice. When reduced to powder,



it makes excellent soup. The leaves are much used for wrapping up fruits, fish, salt provisions, &c. When dry, the Chinese mix them with their smoking tobacco, to render it softer and milder.

KIU-HOA, OR PARTHENIUM, so much neglected in Europe, is indebted only to its culture for the distinguished rank it holds among the Chinese flowers. The skill of the florist, and their continual care, have brought this plant to such perfection that Europeans scarcely know it. The elegance and lightness of its branches, the beautiful indentation of its leaves, the splendour and duration of its flowers seem, indeed, to justify the *flori-mania* of the Chinese for this plant. By their attention to its culture, they have procured more than three hundred species of it, and almost every year produces a new one. A list of the names of all these kind would be equally tedious and disgusting; we shall only say, in general, that, in its flowers are united all the possible combinations of shapes, and colours. Its leaves are no less various: some of them are thin, others thick; some are very small, and some large and broad; some are indented like those of the oak, while others resemble those of the cherry-tree; some may be seen cut in the form of fins, and others are found serrated on the margin, and tapering towards the points.

#### HERBS AND MEDICINAL PLANTS.

The simples, and medicinal plants of China, form a rich and extensive branch of its natural history. But as it is not our intention to give a Chinese herbal, we shall only mention a few of the most useful.



**RHUBARB.** The *tai-hoang*, or *rhubarb*, grows in several provinces of the empire; but the best is that of *Se-tchuen*. The stem of rhubarb resembles a small bamboo, or Chinese cane; it is hollow, and exceedingly brittle; it rises to the height of three or four feet, and is of a dusky violet-colour. In the month of march, it shoots fourth long, thick leaves, which are very rough to the touch: these leaves are ranged four by four on the same stalk, and form a calix. The flowers of this plant are yellow, and sometimes violet. In June it produces a small black seed, and it is pulled in the month of September. The roots of rhubarb reckoned best, are those that are heaviest and most variegated with veins. It is very difficult to dry them, so as to free them from all their moisture. The Chinese after having cleaned them, cut them in slices an inch or two in thickness, and dry them on stone slabs, under which large fires are kindled. They keep continually turning these slices on the warm slabs; but, as this operation is not sufficient to dry them thoroughly, they thread them like beads, and suspend them in a place exposed to the greatest heat of the sun, until they are in a condition to be preserved without danger of spoiling. A pound of the best rhubarb in China costs only two pence.

**HAI-TSAO-TONG-KONG.** The shape of this plant is exactly like that of the worm. It has the head, eyes, body, different rings which the skin forms upon the back, &c. of that reptile. This resemblance is more particularly striking when the plant is young and fresh; for if it be kept any time, especially when exposed to the air, it becomes blackish, and soon corrupts, on account of the softness of its substance. It is about nine



tenths of an inch in thickness, and of a yellowish colour; it is very rare in China, where it is accounted an exotic, and is seldom to be met with but in the emperor's gardens. It however grows in Thibet, and is also found, though in small quantities, in the province of *Se-tchuen*, which borders on Thibet. The properties of this root are almost the same as those attributed to *gin-seng*, except that the frequent use of it does not, like *gin-seng*, occasion bleedings and hemorrhages. It strengthens the stomach, and is said to restore and invigorate debilitated constitutions.

SAN-TSI. This plant grows without cultivation in the provinces of Koei-tcheou, Yun-nan and Se-tchuen. It shoots forth eight stems, which have no branches; that in the middle, which is highest, has three leaves at its extremity; the other seven have only one each. From this determinate number of leaves it has its name, *san-tsi* or *three and seven*. All these stalks proceed from a round root, about four inches in diameter. From this root spring others, which are oblong, smaller, and covered with a rough, hard rind; the interior substance of which is softer, and of a yellowish colour. These little roots are what are generally used in medicine. The middle stem only bears flowers; these are white, they grow from its extremity, in the form of grapes, and blow in the month of July.

When the Chinese are desirous of propagating this plant, they cut the root in slices; these they put into the earth about the vernal equinox, and in the space of a month, it shoots forth its stalks; at the end of three years, the plant has acquired its utmost size. The Chinese physicians use the *san-tsi* for wounds and spitting



of blood : and consider it as a sovereign specific in the small-pox. Some of the missionaries assert, that they have seen the blackest and most virulent pustules become bright and of a beautiful red, as soon as the patient has swallowed some of this root.

**CASSIA-TREE.** The cassia-tree is found in that part of the province of Yun-nan which borders on the kingdom of Ava. It is very high, and bears long pods ; on that account the Chinese have given it the name of *tchang-ko-tse-chu*, *the tree with oblong fruit*. These pods are longer than those seen in Europe.

**GIN-SENG.** The most esteemed of all the plants of China is *gin-seng*, which the Manchew Tartars call *or-hota*, *the queen of plants*. The Chinese physicians speak of it with a kind of enthusiasm, and enumerate, without end, the wonderful properties which they ascribe to it. The root of *gin-seng* is white and rough ; its stem is smooth and very round, and of a deep-red colour. Its height is various, according to the vigour of the plant. From the extremity of the stalk proceed a number of branches, equally distant one from the other, and, in their growth, never deviate from the same plan. Each branch bears five small leaves full of fibres, the upper parts of which are of a dark green, and the lower of a shining whitish green. All these leaves are finely indented on the margin. A particular stem of this flower produces a small cluster of very round red berries ; but not fit for eating. Their stone, which resembles those of other fruits, is very hard, and contains the germ from which the plant is propagated. *Gin-seng* is easily distinguished by its form, and the colour of its fruit, when it has any ; but it often happens that it bears none, though its root may be very old.



This plant decays and springs up every year. The Chinese never sow the seed, because it has never been known to grow. It is probable that the germ of this plant is slow in opening, and that the husk which contains it remains long in the earth before it sends forth any root: some *gin-seng* roots are found which are neither longer nor thicker than the little finger, although they have successively produced more than ten or twelve stems in as many years.

This plant has at all times been the principal riches of Eastern Tartary, where it grows. It is found between the thirty-ninth and forty-seventh degrees of northern latitude, and between the tenth and twentieth of eastern longitude, reckoning from the meridian of Peking. This extent of country is occupied by a chain of steep mountains, covered with almost impenetrable forests. It is upon the declivities of these frightful mountains, and in their forests, in the neighbourhood of fissures made by floods, below rocks, at the roots of trees, and in the middle of herbs of every species that this plant is found. It never grows in plains, valleys, or marshy ground, or in the bottoms of the clefts made by torrents, or in places that are too open. If the forest happens to take fire, and to be consumed, this plant does not again appear for three or four years. It delights in the shade, and every where seems desirous of sheltering itself from the rays of the sun.

No private person is allowed to gather *gin-seng*: it belongs entirely to the emperor, who sends ten thousand soldiers into Tartary every year to collect it. The following order is observed by this army of herbalists—After having divided the ground, each troop, com-



posed of an hundred men, range themselves in a line, with certain intervals between every ten. They then advance gradually in the same direction, searching for the *gin-seng* with great care ; and in this manner they traverse during a fixed number of days, the space assigned them. When the term prescribed is expired, mandarins appointed to preside over this business, and who lodge under tents in the neighbourhood, send persons to the different troops, to see that their numbers are complete ; for it often happens, that some of them lose themselves, or are devoured by savage beasts.

These herbalists suffer many hardships during this expedition. They carry with them neither tents nor beds, being sufficiently loaded with their provision of millet. During the whole of their journey, they are exposed to all the inclemencies of the air, and pass the night either in the forests or at the bottom of some rock. The mandarins send them, from time to time, pieces of beef, or other flesh, which they devour, bloody and half raw. In this manner do these ten thousand men pass six months of the year in collecting *gin-seng*.

FOU-LIN. This plant must not be confounded with the *tou-fou-lin*, or what is commonly called in Europe *China root*. The latter is very common in China, and is sold at a moderate price ; but *fou-lin* is exceedingly dear, and holds a distinguished rank among the medicinal plants which grow in that country.

The Chinese Herbal, describing the *fou-lin*, gives it neither stem, leaves nor flowers ; from which we are inclined to think it a kind of mushroom. The best roots of the *fou-lin* were formerly found in Chen-si ; but some superior have been discovered in the province



of Yun-nan, which are the only kind now sent to court, where they are sold at a taël the pound. This root grows also in the province of Tche-kiang, where it is much cheaper; but it is not so good as that of the province of Yun-nan. A physician has remarked, that the *fou-lin* of Tche-kiang, being soft and spongy, and having less strength and substance than that of Yun-nan, cannot stand the sharp nitrous air of Pe-kin: on the contrary, the *fou-lin* of the provinces of Yun-nan and Chen-si has few pores, and is very solid and weighty.

The *fou-lin* grows in the neighbourhood of pines, at the distance of about two yards from the largest trees; but, in order to find it, the earth sometimes must be dug up to the depth of six or seven feet. The Chinese pretend that a delicate vapour exhales from the spot where this root is inclosed, which does not escape the eye of the experienced botanist. Good *fou-lin* remains in the earth without rotting, and without being hurt by worms; and the longer it has continued there, its substance is so much the more perfect. F. d'Entrecolles speaks thus of this root in one of his letters: “The Chinese Herbal,” says he, “assures us that good *fou-lin* is found in the earth, on the mountains, or in valleys near which old pines have been cut down; that it is from the subtle and spirituous substance which flies off from the pines, and which is dispersed throughout the soil, that it is formed, and receives its nourishment: whence I apprehend that the *fou-lin* may spring up in the same manner as some kinds of mushrooms, which do not adhere to the earth by any visible root. Perhaps the *fou-lin* is a species of *fungus* from the large roots of pines that have been cut



“ down ; the nutritive juices of which, being kept back,  
 “ are collected together, and produce this substance,  
 “ which is at first soft, and more or less spongy in pro-  
 “ portion to the refinous quality of the pine. The *fou-*  
 “ *lin* which I have had in my hands appeared to me  
 “ never to have had any roots by which it adhered to  
 “ those of the pine ; and no mention is made of them  
 “ in any book : but if it attaches itself strongly to the  
 “ roots of the pine, we may consider it as a mistletoe  
 “ peculiar to these roots, especially as the pine often has  
 “ on its trunk a kind of moss, united to it by no fibre,  
 “ although it derives its nourishment from it.”

When the *fou-lin* is to be used, it is prepared by  
 stripping off its rind, which has no virtue, and by boil-  
 ing the remaining substance for a few seconds. The  
 properties attributed to this root by the Chinese phy-  
 sicians are very numerous : it is mild and temperate in  
 its operation, it contains nothing hurtful, and has no  
 need of any corrective. They recommend it in diseases  
 of the liver and breast, for the asthma, dropsy, sup-  
 pression of urine, flatulencies, and for dissolving phlegm.  
 They assert that it stops vomitings, prevents convulsions  
 in children, and that, by strengthening the reins, it  
 procures females a safe and easy delivery. As the *fou-*  
*lin* grows always in the neighbourhood of pines, it  
 might probably be found in Europe, were proper search  
 made for it.

TI-HOANG. The Chinese give this name to the root  
 of the large comfrey : the best of which is found in *Ho-*  
*nan*, in the neighbourhood of the city Hoai-king. The  
 roots of this plant, when dried, are about the size of a  
 finger, but much longer. The Chinese physicians as-



cribe to them many salutary properties ; and the use of them has become very common in all the provinces of the empire. Rich people take pills of *ti-boang* every morning, as people in Europe drink tea, coffee and chocolate. Some cut it into thin slices, and use it in decoction, or when baked in the steam of boiling water : others pound it, and form it into boluses, which they swallow with warm water. Five other kinds of plants, or ingredients, are commonly added to it, which are aromatic, cordial, diuretic, acid and a little soporific ; but the *ti-boang* is always the basis of these pills.

We have now mentioned the most particular of the trees, plants, shrubs, &c. that ornament the Chinese gardens, or are used in the *Materia Medica* ; these countries are, however, a world of which we are too ignorant, and which some very fortunate event can alone bring us acquainted with.

#### QUADRUPEDS, BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES AND FISHES.

The mountains and vast forest of China abound with every species of wild animals, such as the rhinoceros, elephants, leopards, tygers, bears, wolves, foxes, buffaloes, camels, horses, wild mules, &c. Beavers, fables and ermines are also found in the northern provinces ; but the skins which they furnish are much inferior to those procured from Siberia.

Game is common in China. The squares of Pe-kin, in winter, are filled with different heaps of volatile, terrestrial and aquatic animals, hardened by cold and perfectly secure against all corruption. Prodigious quantities of elks, stags, deer, goats, wild boars, hares, rabbits, squirrels and wild rats, geese, ducks, partridges, pheasants and quails are seen there, as are also several kinds of game, not to be found in Europe.



The Chinese horses have neither the strength, beauty, nor swiftness of ours; and the inhabitants of the country have not the art of breaking them properly: those in the military service are said to be so timid, that they betake themselves to flight whenever they hear the neighing of the Tartar Horses: besides, as they are not shod, their hoofs are soon destroyed; so that, in six years, the best horse becomes unfit for service.

Camels, both wild and domestic, are found in the north east part of China, and the fat found in the bunches of the wild camels, which is named *bunch-oil*, is much used in the Chinese medicine.

There are several species of apes in China. A species named *sin-sin*, differ from the rest in their size, being equal to that of an ordinary man. They walk with facility on their hind legs; and all their actions have a singular conformity to those of the human species.

The most beautiful quadruped of China is a stag, which is about the size of our middle-sized dogs. The princes and mandarins buy them at an excessive price, and keep them as curiosities in their gardens. They have also another species of an enormous size, which they call the *horse-stag*.

In China is also found the *musk-deer*, or as the Chinese call it the *hiang-tchang-tse*. This animal is very common, and is met with, not only in the southern provinces, but also in those which are to the west of Peking, but the finest are found in the kingdom of Thibet: it has no horns; and the colour of its hair, which is long and rough, approaches near to black or dark brown; under the belly and tail it is white.



The bag which contains its musk, which is found in the male only, is formed of a very thin membrane covered with a kind of hair exceedingly fine and soft, and formed on the belly. The flesh of the female deer is well-tasted, and is served up at the most delicate tables of the Chinese.

The Jesuits inform us that in the thick forests of Tary, to the north of the great wall, there is found a species of *flying-fox*. They describe his wings as being only thin membranes, which extend from one foot to another, and reach to his tail. This animal never flies but by darting himself from the top of one tree to another, which is lower : he has not the power of raising himself, and of flying as he mounts. A kind of *flying-rat* they say is also seen near *Keou-cuai* : it is larger than a common rat, and his wings like those of the fox already mentioned ; it is doubtful whether either of these are any thing else than different species of the flying squirrels.

China has birds of every species : eagles, falcons, pelicans, birds of paradise, swans, storks and paroquets, which are inferior to those of the West-Indies neither in the variety nor beauty of their plumage, nor in the facility with which they learn to speak.

Insects of almost every species are found in China, and the butterflies or rather moths found on the mountain *Le-feou-chan*, situated in the province of *Quang-tong*, are so much prized, that they are sent to court. They are of greater size than those of Europe, their wings are much broader, their colours are variegated in an extraordinary manner, and they have a surprising brightness. These butterflies or moths remain motion-



less on the trees in the day-time, and they suffer themselves to be taken without difficulty. In the evening, they begin to flutter about, almost in the same manner as bats, which some of them seem to equal in size, on account of the extent of their wings. The Chinese also boast much of the butterflies found on the mountains called *Si-chan*, in the province of *Pe-tcheli*; but they are small, and not so much valued as those of the mountain *Lo-feou-chan*.

The silk insects are different from silk-worms, resemble caterpillars, and are found in great numbers on the trees and in the fields of the province of *Chang-tong*. They propagate without any care, and feed indiscriminately on the leaves of the mulberry, and on those of other trees. They do not spin their silk circularly and in the same manner as common silk-worms, which form theirs into balls: they produce it in filaments and long threads, which, being carried away by the wind, are caught by the trees and bushes: the Chinese collect these threads, and make a kind of stuff of them, called *kien-tcheou*, inferior in lustre to those manufactured of common silk; it might be taken at first sight, for coarse woollen stuff or drugget: it is, however, much esteemed in China, and sold there sometimes for more than the richest satin. This stuff is closely woven, it never cuts, lasts very long, washes like linen, and, when manufactured with care, is scarce susceptible of being spotted, even with oil. The insects which produce this singular silk are of two kinds; one larger and blacker than silk worms, and called *tsouen-kien*; the other smaller, and known by the name of *tiao-kien*. The silk of the first species of these worms is of a reddish grey;



that of the second is blacker, and the cloth made of them partakes of both these colours.

**OU-POEY-TSE.** This is a name which the Chinese give to a kind of nests made by certain insects upon the leaves and branches of the tree called *yen-fau-tse*. These nests are much used in dying, and the physicians employ them in medicine. Some of these nests were brought to Europe, and put into the hands of the celebrated Mr. Geoffroy, who, after having examined them with the utmost attention, thought he perceived some conformity in them to those excrescences which grow on the leaves of the elm, and which the peasantry call *elm bladders*: he found these nests so sharp and astringent to the taste, that he considered them as far superior to every other species of galls used by the dyers. The Chinese are however satisfied that insects which produce a kind of wax, construct for themselves on the branches and leaves of this tree, these little retreats, where they wait for the time of their metamorphosis, or, at least, deposit in safety their eggs, which compose that fine dust with which the *ou-poe-y-tse* are filled. Some of the *ou-poe-y-tse* are as large as one's fist; but these are rare, and are generally produced by a worm of extraordinary strength, or which has associated with another, as two silk-worms are sometimes seen shut up in the same ball. The smallest *ou-poe-y-tse* are about the size of a chestnut; and in form either round or oblong; at first they are of a dark green colour, which afterwards changes to yellow; and the husk, though pretty firm, becomes then very brittle.

The Chinese peasants collect these *ou-poe-y-tse* before the first hoar-frosts. They take care to kill the worm



inclosed in the husks, and for this purpose expose them for some time, to the steam of boiling water. The *ou-poey-tse* are used at Pe-kin, for giving paper a durable and deep-black colour ; in the provinces of Kiangnan and Tche-kiang, where a great deal of beautiful sattin is made, they are employed for dying the silk before it is put on the loom. The Chinese literati also blacken their beards with them when they become white.

The medicinal properties of the *ou-poey-tse*, if we can believe the Chinese physicians, are very numerous. They introduce them into the composition of many of their remedies. They recommend them as an excellent specific for curing inflammations and ulcers, and for counteracting the effects of poison ; and they say they employ them with success in the dropfy, phthisis, epilepsy, catarrhs, sickness, fluxions of the eyes and ears, and in many other disorders.

It is impossible to give a list of the different kinds of fish to be found in the lakes, rivers and seas of China. The missionaries, to whom we are indebted for the greater part of the knowledge we have concerning this empire, have not thrown sufficient light upon any branch of natural history. They, however, assure us, that they observed in China most of the different kinds seen in Europe ; besides which there is a fish called *tcha-kia-yu*, or the fish in armour, which the Chinese highly esteem. They give it this name, because its body is defended by sharp scales, ranged in straight lines. The flesh of this fish is very white, and it tastes almost like veal. It generally weighs forty pounds. When the weather is fine, they catch another kind of



fish, so extremely white, that it is called the *flour-fish*. It is, above all, remarkable for its black eye-balls, which appear as if set in two circles of the most brilliant silver. This fish is found in such abundance on the coast of the province of *Kiang-nan*, that four hundred pounds weight of them are sometimes taken at one haul with a net.

The coasts of the province of Tche-kiang swarm with a species of fish which have a great resemblance to the Newfoundland cod: an incredible quantity of them is consumed on the sea coast of Fo-kien, besides what are salted on the spot, to be transported to the interior parts of the country. They are taken from the nets, and stowed in the holds of the vessels, between layers of salt, and, notwithstanding the excessive heats, they are thus transported to the remotest provinces of the empire.

The missionaries speak of another kind of fish, the figure of which is as singular as it is frightful and disgusting. The Chinese, they say, call it *hai-seng*; it makes one of their favourite dishes; and there is scarcely any entertainment given at which it is not served up. It is generally seen floating near the sea-coasts of Chang-tong and Fo-kien, where the missionaries at first took it for a lump of inanimate matter; but, having made some of the boys belonging to their vessel catch it, they perceived that this shapeless mass was a living and organized being. It swam about in the tub into which they first threw it, and lived for a long time. The Chinese sailors informed the missionaries, that this fish has four eyes and six feet; but on examining it with attention, they could only discover two places



where it appeared to have fight : for it seemed afraid when any thing approached them. If every thing that enables the *hai-seng* to move is to be considered as feet, a number of small excrescences, like buttons, dispersed over its body, may be accounted as such. It has no bones, and it dies on being pressed. This fish is easily preserved, when put into salt ; and it is transported in that manner, and sold as a delicacy throughout the whole empire : it does not, however, appear to have been much relished by the missionaries.

The Chinese have a salt-water fish which they call *ming-fou-you*, that is literally the *fish with a bright belly*. It has a round head, and a mouth like the beak of a falcon. It has eight legs round its head, but neither scales, tail, nor bones. *The Geography of Moukden* adds, that it has two tufts of a beard, which resemble two bunches of cord, which it uses to attach itself to the bottom of the sea, or to a rock, during a storm, or when the waves are too strong or too much agitated ; hence springs the name *niomré*, which the Mantchew Tartars give it, signifying *a moored bark*.

The small fish called gold and silver fish, are kept by the Chinese for ornament in small ponds in their gardens and courts. In warm countries these fish multiply fast, provided care is taken to collect their spawn, which floats on the water, and which they almost entirely devour. This spawn the Chinese put into a particular vessel exposed to the sun, and preserve there until vivified by the heat : gold-fish, however, seldom multiply when they are kept in close vases, because they are then too much confined. In order to render them fruitful, they must be put into reservoirs of considera-



ble depth, in some places at least, and which are constantly supplied with fresh water.

At a certain time of the year a prodigious number of barks are seen on the great river Yang-tse-kiang, which go thither to purchase the spawn of these fish. Towards the month of May the neighbouring inhabitants shut up the river in several places with mats and hurdles, and leave only a space in the middle sufficient for the passage of barks. The spawn of the fish, which the Chinese can distinguish at first sight, although a stranger could perceive no traces of it in the water, is stopped by these hurdles. The water mixed with spawn is then drawn up, and after it has been put into large vessels, it is sold to merchants, who transport it afterwards to every part of the empire, and dispose of it by measure to those who are desirous of stocking their ponds and reservoirs.



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